

Comments on NPRM 05-235

Dear Sirs:

Having been an amateur radio operator for more than 30 years now, I have seen the requirements for licensing drop ever lower and lower over the years.

I do not understand how what was once a “privilege” somehow becomes a right, or so it would seem.

I and others of us have worked hard to become proficient in morse code and electronic theory, our reward for this hard work? The privilege of being able to operate a radio transmitter on the hf bands.

First the commission started publishing the question and answer pools (so anyone could simply “memorize the correct answers”.

Next the commission dropped the code requirement to a max of 5 wpm for all classes.

Now there is an NPRM to eliminate the requirement for any code proficiency whatsoever!

What are we trying to accomplish with this proposed action?

Does no one remember the 11 meter fiasco? Citizens Band was created on the same basis as what is happening to our ham bands, little or no requirement for code proficiency or electronic theory, the result will be the same, A NIGHTMARE!

The Citizens Band radio service became so unmanageable that enforcement for the most part was dropped. Operators can get away with most anything they want to try with little worry about consequences. The Commission even dropped the licensing of said individuals, and now they want to DO IT AGAIN!

Morse code is not absolutely necessary to operate a radio transmitter, this I will admit, but it does serve to provide a “buffer” if you will, to require at least some learning other than memorization to get licensed. There is nothing hard about getting 5 wpm code. My goodness it is basically just being able to say your ABC’s in morse code in about 1 minute. Jeepers, I learned my ABC’s in the first grade!

I know of no licensed amateur radio operator who will not bend over backwards to help an aspiring ham to learn his or her code, and with diligence and some practice any ordinary person can learn to copy 5 wpm

code in less than a month.

My Father always said anything too easily obtained was too little respected. This is true, I worked very hard to become a REAL extra class operator, 20 wpm code and real theory (no memorizing of question pools) I obtained my Advanced Class ticket after about 3 years of being a Technician, but it took me another 18 years to get my Extra. Oh I could have done it faster but I was a single parent with a daughter to raise and a living to earn, but you know what? I wouldn't have it any other way. I almost wish I had kept my Advanced class license now though, at least when someone looked me up on a data base they would know I actually passed 13 wpm code. Now, even though I passed 20 wpm, no one knows this, when they look me up it merely says Extra Class, they have no way of knowing whether I am an "extra lite" or a "real extra".

To me the code requirement is like a rite of passage. It does not have to be a needed mode...just something that you do to prove you are dedicated enough to be granted a license to operate.

You could look at it this way, lets assume that there is a shortage of neurosurgeons. One way to swell their ranks would be to lower the requirements to practice neurosurgery! Hey, we could just require that a prospective neurosurgeon only be able to spell the word "neurosurgeon" to get a license to practice. But would YOU want to let this guy operate on you? I think not! We could just let anyone have a license to practice law if he or she could spell "lawyer" but would you want this guy defending you in a capital case?

In summary I feel we should retain at least 5 wpm requirement for HF operation and for my part, since no one actually HAS TO HOLD AN EXTRA, the 20 wpm requirement for the Extra license should be re-instated. After all, the name of the license class is "EXTRA" and to me that implies EXTRA effort with EXTRA privileges for having worked hard to acquire the knowledge and code proficiency to get that license!

Thank you
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